



Arts & Crafts

LAWN & GARDEN
SAVER

Spill Absorber

Cool Ties

FLOOD WATER BAGS

International

Hydroseeding

Differences in Water Absorbing Polymers

Polyacrylamide is sold under many different names: Terra-Sorb®, Hydrosource®, Hydro-mulch, water crystals, PAM, copolymer, Moist Soil®, Aquasorb®, Agrosoke®, Smart Soil®, Aquacrystals™, Bioplex™, Agro-diamonds®, ... but not all polymers are created equal.

All these products are polymers, but not all polyacrylamide is the same. Polyacrylamide was developed in the 60's to grow plants in the desert and has been refined to last longer and absorb water at higher rates. Many people believe polyacrylamide is the active material in baby diapers, but that polymer is polyacrylate, which is a close cousin in the polymer family. Polyacrylate is capable of absorbing greater amounts of liquid than polyacrylamide, but rapidly breaks down.

Polymers have recently been introduced in the "soil additive" market with great success. These soils are sold at major chain nursery supply stores under the names of "Smart Soil" and "Moist Soil" in 40 lb containers. These products contain only pennies of polymer, and the soil is greatly enhanced, however the price is twice as much as regular potting soil. Save money by buying regular potting soil and adding polymer and create your own "Moist Soil". Prior to polymers, peat moss was the soil additive of choice to hold water (20 times its' weight), but polyacrylamide (400 times) is rapidly gaining in popularity due to its' superior performance. Peat moss is seen by some as a non-environmental soil additive due to the manner in which it is harvested. However, polyacrylamide is a non-toxic earth friendly product which works for 7-9 years in the soil then breaks down to CO₂, water and nitrogen. Various reports from Co-operative Extension Service studies indicate that polyacrylamide is a source of nitrogen for some crops and recommend it as a beneficial

soil amendment.

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